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ABSTRACT

The speech examines mainstreaming of handicapped students in the context of Canadian culture. Integration is seen to be a more appropriate term since it better reflects the pluralism of Canadian society. Basic goals of the Canadian educational system as a whole are identified and recent legislative actions at the provincial and federal level in Canada are summarized. Different models of integration are described including the resource room model, the revolving door model, the specialist teacher, the resource teacher/consultant, individualized instruction, and the segregated classroom within the regular school. Integration requires accessible school buildings, professional and paraprofessional support services, and provision for continuous assessment. The paper specifically reviews the St. John (New Brunswick) 5-year plan for implementation of a fuller integrative model, and reactions of consumer/participants. Presented are the plan's statement of philosophy and identified goals of special education. Evaluation indicates greater personnel needs especially in such areas as speech pathology, psychotherapy, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy. An inservice program to train special education teachers to provide resource/consultant services rather than pull-out services is noted. After the first year of the program, responses of teachers have been generally favorable though they report an increased workload. Negative responses of one student are cited. (DB)

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MAINSTREAMING

CANADIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

CONVENTION

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

SEPTEMBER 27 - 30, 1988

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Paper presented at the Convention of the Canadian Education Association
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It is my pleasure to be here with you to consider, discuss and share observations on the topic of Mainstreaming.

Call it mainstreaming or integration - the terms vary from one jurisdiction to another! There are those who contend that they are indeed synonymous but I was interested and intrigued to read Bowd's (Allan D. Bowd, Lakehead University) article on the conceptual differences between Mainstreaming and Integration in a 1987 issue of the Canadian Journal for Exceptional Children (Vol. 3. No. 3, 1987).

Bowd contends that the two terms are distinctive and that the differences are important. He writes:

> "Mainstreaming is proposed to be an American social construction, embedded in the assimilative cultural tradition of that country. The characterization of Canadian society as a mosaic rather than melting pot...and the consequent deemphasis of mainstream - minority dynamics both imply integration may be more heuristically useful, relevant, and meaningful in Canadian special education"..

He concludes:

"Integration is to be preferred because it reflects

> the pluralism of Canadian society, implies the acceptance of differences through the interaction of exceptional children and their peers..."

I raise this matter of definition not to dispute our session title nor to dispute the term that anyone of you may use or prefer. I do find it a matter of interest but I would like to establish that we can comfortably understand and discuss with one another despite the terminology.

Before one can discuss the process of educating exceptional pupils it is imperative that we accept and affirm that our mandate is to educate - and we must have established goals and purposes for our educational system.

Those goals and purposes will shape and reflect the values held by the community we serve.

Fundamental values may include respect for the individual, a concept of social responsibility, preparation for and eventual involvement in meaningful employment, and the ability and willingness to participate in personally-rewarding leisure activities.

If we believe that every child must be provided with the opportunity to develop as completely as possible according to his talents and needs, then we must aim to nurture growth so that all students will eventually share in the life of our community with competence, integrity and happiness.

Our purpose must be to provide opportunities for the acquisition of basic knowledge and to encourage the development and enhancement of specialized skills. We must recognize our responsibility to teach and develop skills which will facilitate entry into today's and tomorrow's working communities.

Educators must accept the challenge of developing and maintaining in students a feeling of confidence and self-worth, and an understanding of themselves as well as other social and cultural groups.

We must also work to develop the moral and aesthetic sensitivity necessary for a complete and responsible life and further to provide opportunities for students to develop an appreciation of their cultural heritage and the environment in which they live.

Having affirmed that our mandate is to educate, and having

established even very basic goals and purposes for our educational system, only then can we consider process.

Mainstreaming or integration is a process of educating exceptional pupils within the framework of regular education, a model in which all children are permitted to live, grow and learn with their peers. This trend or dimension in education began in Canada approximately twenty years ago.

The CELDIC Report, One Million Children, in 1969 strongly endorsed the fullest possible integration of handicapped children within regular schools and classes.

Just as education reflects the values of our society, so does the law. Our American neighbours first drafted the changing values into educational law with the passage of their Public law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children in 1975. Canadian institutions came to reflect the American trend, to move toward what the U. S. legislation mandated, - education in "the least restrictive environment".

With education a provincial responsibility in Canada, the development of policies and legislation has been somewhat staggered. Certainly our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

denies discriminatory practices and with or without legislation Canadians generally no longer accept, tolerate, or condone discrimination or the denial of rights. Parents of special needs children and advocacy groups have fought their battle, directly and with force to have special education services delivered within the framework of regular education and, in some instances, in the regular classroom setting.

Educators came to question the effectiveness of totally segregated programming, the labelling of children, and their separation or isolation from non-exceptional peers.

The thrust or movement toward integration has resulted in a variety of approaches not only from province to province, from district to school district, but even from child to child. Continuing search and research is appropriate because it is directed toward not only effective mainstreaming but toward appropriate, adequate, meaningful, and effective education.

One of the first responses to the integration movement was the Resource Room, the learning center or helping centre, within the regular school programme. In this model the exceptional student spends most of his time in the regular class but is withdrawn for instruction, by the special education teacher, in

the resource room, usually for several periods a week and possibly for one or two periods per day.

Within the Resource Room model there can be a variety of approaches as well. The resource teacher may provide direct instruction only, may serve as teacher to the student and as consultant to the regular classroom teacher, or in some areas, may be a crisis resource person who receives students when emotional or behavioural problems arise.

Within this same model but often viewed as a reverse integrative approach is the highly-structured, sometimes called, "engineered" classroom. These programmes most often employ specialist teachers to work with emotionally or behaviourally disordered students. The teacher provides instructional programming for the students, acts as a resource person/ consultant to other teachers and slowly moves students into the regular classroom until full mainstreaming is accomplished.

Critics of the resource room model maintain that withdrawal draws attention to the child's exceptionality and may damage his self-image. Others deny this approach on the contention that the only meaningful instruction is that which the student receives in the resource room and further that the remainder of his school

day is lost, or at best less productive learning time.

The revolving door programme falls within the resource room model and is particularly suited to serve students who demonstrate exceptional talent, creativity, and commitment to task. Based on the concepts put forward by Renzulli (1978) this approach allows such students to explore topics of interest, to create and produce exciting projects and to develop as independent learners. Students referred or recommended by classroom teachers "revolve" in and out of the resource room for specific periods of time and for specific projects.

Another approach to implementing and providing mainstreamed or integrated education is the use of specialist teachers as resource persons without the resource room. They are often called Resource Teachers, Consultant Teachers or Methods and Resource Teachers. Their role may vary from being the supplier of curriculum materials to being the traditional consultant. In some situations these persons provide only programme materials and suggestions for use by classroom teachers and exceptional students. Others include diagnostic services, programme prescription, adapted curriculum and appropriate teaching and learning materials for use in the regular classroom.

Within this model is the Resource Teacher/Consultant - not exactly as were just described. Not just a resource person, not just a consultant, not just a supplier of teaching methods and materials but a teacher who does diagnostic assessments, prescribes programmes, adapts curriculum, chooses appropriate instructional materials, provides direct instruction, evaluates, consults, supports, and shares with other teachers.

The Resource Teacher/Consultant, who is not tied to a classroom, can offer a full range of services, as required, to a reasonably-sized group of exceptional students and their teachers. The size of the group served will depend on the severity of need and whether the Resource Teacher/Consultant is school-based or itinerant.

Total or complete integration is a model based on individualized instruction where all children despite their uniqueness, learning strengths or needs, totally share learning opportunities and resources on a full-time basis. In this approach every child is seen as an individual having different learning needs. Total integration appears to be most effective when begun in the early grades. When appropriately placed, children are accepted, despite their differences, and they experience positive social and interpersonal benefits.

The individualized instruction model permits pupils to progress at their own rate and, despite the fact that it places heavy demands on teachers and resources, it is a preferred model of many educators.

A model of programming for special needs students which is less in vogue today, and indeed frowned on by many proponents of mainstreaming, is the segregated classroom within the regular school. It is the approach used most frequently for students with severe handicapping conditions. In this approach students may be integrated into school life through such activities as assemblies, lunch breaks and appropriate social opportunities. It is a form of integration.

Whatever the approach, the model, or the combination of models, - and they are varied, - mainstreaming or integration must not be an end in itself. Integration must enhance the educational process, it must be meaningful and appropriate for the individual student, it must enable learning!

Mainstreaming has been labelled a "movement", some call it a trend, others question is it a fad? a bandwagon? I have some concern that in some instances it may be becoming an obsession! I believe in the integration of exceptional children, I support

and promote mainstreaming. I do not believe or accept the notion of every child in a regular classroom, all of the time, regardless of the individual needs.

Our mandate is to educate. That implies that we will provide opportunities for each and all of our students to develop intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally, and morally, to their fullest potential. It does not suggest, imply, or prescribe the same programme, the same instructional approach, the same goals or the same placement for every student.

The reasons for this educational movement, for integration, appear to be well-founded and with merit. The variety of approaches to implementation and service-delivery, while having their critics and their promoters, provides options and allows for flexibility. Some may choose to adopt one model of integration - my preference is a spectrum of services responding to individual needs.

To adopt the integrated model of education requires a total understanding of the concept, a positive commitment, and a plan for implementation. The plan shall define goals and objectives and must recognize that integration cannot happen overnight. There will be need for both pre-service and in-service programmes

for teachers and for awareness and orientation sessions to the total community. Professional and paraprofessional support services must be available.

Areas of responsibility must be clearly defined and there must be provision for communication and consultation involving all of the partners and participants involved in the process.

School buildings must be accessible, or made accessible, to the handicapped. Adequate support services must be available and this requires funding commitments. It is a myth that integration is less costly than segregated specialized programming.

There must be provision for continuous assessment and evaluation of children presenting unique learning needs. The effects of integration on special needs students and also on non-special needs students must be monitored and evaluated.

The total integration programme will need to be evaluated and there must be a willingness to make changes when it becomes obvious that changes are necessary. Administrators alone cannot judge the benefits or weaknesses of integration. We must seek and document input and reaction from teachers, parents and students.

Later in this session each of you will have the opportunity to discuss your observations, opinions and responses to the integration movement. I should like to tell you something about the New Brunswick scene, my own School District 20's plan for the implementation of a fuller integrative model and some of the consumer/participants' reactions.

Until 1986 the Schools Act of New Brunswick made little or no provision for students with exceptional needs. Pupils with very special long-term developmental needs were provided for under separate legislation, specifically the Auxiliary Classes Act, and legislation providing services and programmes administered through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority to visually and hearing-impaired students. School boards could in fact refuse admission to school to a person who was certified as "mentally defective to the extent that he is unlikely to benefit from regular programming".

In 1981 the New Brunswick Minister of Education established a project to study the legislation and provision of services to children with long-term developmental special needs. I co-chaired that project with Leonard Goguen of the University of Moncton. After much study and consultation we recommended that the New Brunswick's Schools Act be revised so that all children

with unique learning needs would be guaranteed appropriate educational services under one Act. Because education in New Brunswick is totally funded from the central authority, we also recommended that excess costs incurred in the provision of appropriate services to exceptional children be guaranteed. We proposed that the legislation recognize the right of the child to appropriate educational services in the least restrictive environment and further that

> "Comprehensive pre-service and in-service special training concerning the educational needs of the exceptional child, the process of developing individualized educational programs, and the organization of special education service delivery in the least restrictive environment should be made available to administrators, parents and teachers as well as to staff in related services."

We like to think that our study, along with other trends and influences discussed earlier, resulted in changes in New Brunswick's legislation. While the Schools Act has not been totally revised, An Act to Amend the Schools Act, commonly referred to as Bill 85 has been proclaimed and the Auxiliary

Classes Act has been repealed. The Minister of Education and school boards in New Brunswick are now responsible for the education of all children who qualify by age and residency - from six to twenty-one years of age for the non-exceptional student population and from three to twenty-one years of age for those with long-term developmental special needs who would have previously qualified for services under the special Auxiliary Classes Act.

In 1985 the New Brunswick government moved to deinstutionalization and so there are no alternatives such as residential schools for the severely handicapped or the behaviourally and emotionally disturbed child in New Brunswick. Under an agreement between the four Atlantic Provinces, special educational services are still available in a residential setting out of province, (in Nova Scotia), for hearing or visually impaired students who are deemed likely to benefit from such placement and whose parents are willing to accept that service.

School districts in New Brunswick are on a "zero-reject" model. Bill 85 defines a special education program as one which provides for services based on an individual pupil's specific needs rather than on any category or handicap. The new legislation mandates integration.

Section 45(2.1) of the amended legislation states:

> A school board shall place exceptional pupils such that they receive special education programs and services in circumstances where exceptional pupils can participate with pupils who are not exceptional pupils within regular classroom settings to the extent that is considered practicable by the Board having due regard for the educational needs of all pupils"

Bill 85 was proclaimed and came into effect in April, 1987. School boards in the province all responded to the legislation but not in exactly the same manner. There are other New Brunswickers here today who, I know, will share their perceptions, their interpretation of the legislation, their approaches to integration and their experiences.

School District 20 in Saint John considered the legislation along with changing values and attitudes and developed a plan which we hoped would refine, enhance, improve and extend services to students with unique learning needs. The plan, proposed for implementation, review, and evaluation over a five-year period was adopted in the fall of 1987.

Ours is a district with a long history of special education services dating back some sixty years. We began the process of integration in 1971 with mildly handicapped students, took administrative and programming responsibility for students served under the old Auxiliary Classes Act in 1973 and moved to a "zero-reject" model in 1985 when deinstitutionalization brought severely handicapped, medically fragile, and severely emotionally and behaviourally students into the public school system.

We already offered a spectrum of services to students presenting a variety of special needs. It was our contention that we had a quality programme and we expressed our intention to build on the existing programme, reflecting changing values and needs, and responding to the new legislation.

The base on which we developed this plan was the District 20 Board policy on Special Education, its statement of philosophy and its identified goals of special education.

The policy begins:

"Every child has a right to education and all students must be provided with the appropriate programmes, and services that afford them the opportunity to develop to

their full potential.

There is a shared responsibility for educating all students to their fullest potential academically, socially, physically and emotionally, and the Board recognizes its partnership with parents and the Department of Education in this endeavour."

It speaks of the intent to accommodate developmental strengths and needs rather than labels or categories and states "Special education services shall be provided within the regular framework of general education and all students shall receive services in the most enabling environment."

The policy dictates that all students shall receive services in, or as near as possible to, their home school community and that regular classroom teachers shall have primary responsibility for delivery and/or coordination of programmes designed to meet the needs of students assigned to their classrooms. It continues: "Specialist teachers shall be assigned to assist, and cooperate with, the regular classroom teacher in providing individualized educational

programmes and services to students with exceptional needs.

Principals shall have general responsibility for all programmes and services delivered in their schools. Decisions concerning programming for exceptional students shall be made in consultation with the Coordinator of Special Education and the parents."

The Board defines in its policy that all exceptional children shall be provided with learning opportunities that allow them to experience success, enjoy learning, acquire communication and social skills and interact meaningfully with their peers.

In its commitment to provide quality service to all children, the Board defined specific goals of special education which focused on the provision of continuous quality programmes, in as normal an environment as possible, with appropriate and adequate supports.

In developing District 20's five-year-plan, we defined the following general objective:

"To provide a quality continuum of service which affords opportunities to all students to achieve their fullest potential in the most enabling environment."

Specific objectives were defined as follows:

"1. To promote and develop the provision of individualized and specialized services to students within the regular classroom setting.

2. To promote and reinforce the consultancy role of special services staff.

3. To assist and encourage special services staff in their sharing and collaboration with other teachers, support persons, and parents.

4. To develop school-based responsibility for assessment, planning, and instruction.

5. To report identification and assessment results in terms which describe instructional needs rather than student labels or categories.

6. To identify regular classroom teachers who are able and willing to assume the role of resource/consultant teacher.

7. To provide and promote professional development opportunities which will enhance and extend the ability of teachers to respond to unique learning needs.

8. To provide for specialized instructional environments when the educational needs of students warrant such programme provision.

As we embarked on our five-year plan there were 1386 students receiving special education services in District 20. That was 8.6% of our total student population (15,939). We acknowledged that there were others who were in need of, or likely to benefit from some degree or type of special education intervention. It was clear that as we developed and improved our identification system and our delivery of service over the years, the numbers of students referred and/or placed had increased. We considered that with the move to more specialized instruction in regular classrooms, and school-based responsibility for assess-

ment, additional students might receive services without formal identification.

In October, 1987, when the plan was implemented, of the 1386 students receiving special education services, 491 were integrated 100% of the time, 538 were integrated 75% of the time, 152 were integrated for 50% of their programme and 205 spent 25% or less time in integrated settings.

Fifty-seven percent of our special needs students were being served in programmes at the elementary level, 27% were placed in junior high schools and 16% were in senior high school programmes.

We believed that the declining percentages at the two upper level programmes reflected our efforts toward early identification and intervention. We were not surprised to note that at the high school level, 69% of those special needs students were integrated for 50% or less of their programmes. That was attributed to both the nature of high school course work and the fact that students in this group had presented challenging, long-term needs. More positively, however, on the numbers side, there were only 4 young adults in our total high school programme who did not spend any instructional time in

regular programmes. These four are severely, multiply-handicapped students.

We documented in our plan the existing administrative, instructional, professional support and paraprofessional staff serving special needs students in our fifty schools.

We noted that it was difficult to project personnel needs definitively as we embarked on this five-year plan but we did not foresee a significant increase in administrative or instructional staff. We suggested that as the plan unfolds, it may see some reassignment of teachers, but not necessarily increased staff.

We cautioned that fuller integration of students with long-term developmental special needs may result in a demand for more paraprofessional staff, particularly if those students were all to be placed in their neighbourhood schools.

Our plan noted that we were seriously lacking in the area of professional support staff. Our students were and are in need of additional service in speech pathology, psychotherapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Whether the lack of services results from funding

shortfalls or availability of personnel, the problems impacting on the plan must be identified and documented.

It was, and is, our opinion that these necessary support therapy services and consultation should be delivered in the school setting. We maintained that the young people whom we serve require these services and our goals for them are modified, and in some cases restricted, by the lack of service.

In the area of physical facilities, despite the fact that many of our schools are older buildings, we were not faced with difficulty in physically accommodating special needs students. Our maintenance staff has been attentive in this area and is continuing on a programme of improved accessibility for the physically handicapped. Parents have thus far been cooperative in accepting the "next-nearest" accessible programme location. Our District's physical facilities were not expected to impede our plan for improved service.

In initiating our plan, for the school year 1987-88 we selected ten special education teachers, Resource Room Teachers, who previously withdrew a total of 200 special needs students from regular classrooms for educational services. We invited those teachers to work with us in adopting a model of

intervention which involved the regular classroom teacher providing the specialized curriculum and individualized educational plan with support, and materials from the specialist teacher.

Through bi-weekly in-service sessions we assisted those special education teachers in their programming efforts. We provided each of them with materials and additional training concerning diagnostic assessments, achievement testing, and preparation of informal inventories of individual pupil's learning strengths and weaknesses. We committed ourselves to promoting their efforts and providing assistance in their role as consultant teachers.

Each of these teachers was experienced in preparing IEP's in collaboration with parents and regular classroom teachers. We acknowledged that a model which required implementation by the regular classroom teacher would require fuller cooperation and sharing. We agreed to provide for a sharing of concerns and successes in this process.

Participating teachers' in-service programmes were to be provided or arranged by the Coordinator of Special Education.

Principals of the schools in which this programme change was being initiated were consulted prior to implementation. Each indicated support and a willingness to participate. They agreed to work with Special Services staff to establish Teacher Assistance Teams in their schools. This approach was to allow for school-based assessment and planning for students identified and referred as experiencing learning and/or adjustment problems. These school principals agreed to meet bi-monthly to participate in professional development activities and share observations.

Assignment of several more students with long-term developmental special needs to regular classes during that first school year enabled us to free three other specialist teachers to act as itinerant resource teachers working with students, classroom teachers, and parents.

The Team Leader of our Pupil Evaluation Services committed himself to work with his own staff, as well as with the Teacher Assistance Teams in schools, to ensure that identification and assessment reports were written in terms of instructional and service needs.

We proposed special programmes servicing students at the elementary level who demonstrate creativity, high achievement,

and commitment to task. A programme designed and coordinated by a special education teacher, in cooperation with an in-school committee, was to establish a talent pool and offer mini-courses to recommended students. Staff members in other schools were invited to submit proposals for enriching programmes to their gifted/talented students. We offered to support their efforts by providing teacher-release time.

The plan clearly identified specific professional growth opportunities that would be provided for classroom teachers, special education personnel and school principals and committed financial support and release from teaching time and administrative duties to allow this in-service programme to be realized.

Members of our Special Services staff agreed to be available to provide professional development programmes at school-based in-service sessions.

The Superintendent of Schools named a committee of senior administrative staff and representatives of the local teacher's association to monitor the implementation of this fuller integrative model of special services delivery.

It was proposed that we multiply the efforts and effects of our initial year's plan over the following four years.

We anticipated that the 1987-88 year would be one of breaking ground and increasing awareness of fuller and more total integration. Through hard work and concentrated effort we expected to experience success but we also expected to identify and confront difficult situations. We promised to evaluate, every step of the way, by seeking and documenting reaction from administrators, teachers, parents and students. We agreed that teachers would measure student's academic gains by comparing pre-test and post-test scores. Attention was to be given to social and behavioural performance. Provision was needed and would be made for modifications if students' needs warranted another approach.

We proposed that the year-one plan be expanded to more special education teachers each year and that Teacher Assistance Teams be established in more schools each year. It was and is our plan to enlist the aid of trained and participating teachers and principals to assist with new programmes as teachers and schools join the model. Their training and experience are expected to enhance our efforts as the programme progresses but it is not realistic to expect that they can manage their own

assignments and provide assistance to more than one other developing programme.

Much of our experience and success in the total integration of students with long-term developmental special needs has been with younger children placed in elementary school programmes. Careful monitoring is essential and new or different intervention programmes may require development and implementation as these students experience "the widening gap".

As we proceed with the resource/consultant model of special education teachers we expect that we will encounter some staff members who indicate a preference to work directly with students. At the same time, we will be identifying regular classroom teachers who have been trained and are experienced in integration and who could comfortably assume a resource/consultant teacher role.

How was our plan received? By school staffs with some degree of apprehension, with some concern but also with a willingness to try the new model. It is imporant to remember that we began with principals and teachers whom we believed could and would make it work and we also moved to integrate more fully those students whom we felt could cope and benefit from it.

As we implemented our plan so were other school districts across the province responding to the new legislation and guidelines. The New Brunswick Teachers' Association undertook a province-wide survey of 3200 classroom teachers on the topic of integration.

They report that teachers were generally in favour of integration but felt that additional funds and resources were needed to meet the programme's objectives. They indicated a need for more professional training and in-service, a reduction in class sizes, and more professional and paraprofessional support.

The Teachers' Association reported its findings on a provincial basis, not district by district, but let's look at some of the comments teachers made. Concerning the effect of integration on special needs students, teachers commented:

"the student with special needs is able to adapt to a new environment"

"is a good worker"

"is accepted by peers"

"has increased self-esteem"

"is part of the group"

"is pushed to higher goals"

On the negative side of the same issue some teachers said:

"the special needs student does not receive enough individual attention"

"does not fit in"

"is treated as a pet"

"cannot handle any unstructured activities"

Questioned about the effect of integration of special needs pupils on the other students, 64% of teachers responding reported that it had no effect, positive, or very positive effects.

Eighty-four percent of teachers with special needs students in their classes reported an increase in their workload.

Some of the positive comments were that they "felt supportive and accommodating, they did not begrudge the extra time, they were concerned yet gratified, they felt challenged to meet the needs of all students - and some expressed their delight with the opportunity of teaching special needs students.

Some were negative in their personal reactions. Those teachers commented that they felt over-worked and under-assisted, that they were surviving, not teaching, that they had been dumped on and that parents expect miracles.

Teachers overwhelmingly responded that class sizes must be reduced if exceptional pupils are integrated into regular classrooms - 93% rated class size reduction as important or very important. They emphasized the need for professional and paraprofessional support.

What does all this tell us - it tells us that the front-line workers, classroom teachers support the concept of integration, and that they know what's needed to make it work. I suggest to you that the positive comments came from teachers with pupils who were appropriately integrated with adequate and appropriate supports. Maybe the negative comments came from teachers who really were "dumped on".

Nobody did a survey of parents but then most people believe you don't need to ask, that all parents of exceptional children want total integration or full-time regular class placement. Not so - that's another myth - like the one about integrated programmes costing less.

We maintain very close and frequent contact with parents. Some push for total integration, are willing even to go to court, if necessary, to accomplish it. Others demand the resource room model and still some prefer the segregated classroom within the regular school. I should like to think that we have this range of preferences because parents have confidence in what we recommend as an appropriate instructional environment for their son or daughter. Our Board has heard delegations of parents of children with long-term developmental needs supporting integration and requesting regular class placement and most recently a delegation of parents of mildly educationally-handicapped students requesting that the Resource Room model be retained so as not to "short-change" their children.

And students, how are they faring in this new model? Most are thriving, gaining from new experiences - smiling - happy, many achieving beyond our expectations. But not all. Let me tell you about a conversation with one junior high school student

who participated in the fuller integrative model this past year.

She said "I hate my resource teacher coming in to the classroom to help me when Mrs. M. teaches the English lesson."

Why? she was asked.

"Because now all the kids know that I can't read and I need extra help."

"Didn't they know where you were going and why - when you went to the resource room?"

"Yes, they knew but when I was gone, they forgot, and they didn't know what I was doing there. I felt good about going there - and I learned more!"

Might it have been different for her if she had been "brought up" on the totally integrated or more fully integrated model? I'm not sure. I don't know if she would have felt better or learned more.

I do know that administrators must listen to students, parents and teachers.

Integration is a positive and progressive movement in education but it is not without its challenges. Integration does not mean an elimination or reduction of special educational services but rather an expanded and enhanced service delivery system. The delivery of services within the regular framework of education demands that more teachers must develop skill and expertise in responding to exceptional needs. It is a challenge to plan and implement with care and commitment and still maintain a willingness to restructure if necessary.

I don't believe that there is a single, right, approach to integration. It will, and perhaps should, vary from district to district, because of a variety of factors, perhaps most significantly because of funding mechanisms and funding levels. Most certainly approaches will vary according to our populations and individual children's needs.

Call it mainstreaming or integration, it is still but a means and a process within the greater challenge of education.